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SENSITIVE

WHITE HOUSE FOR OGC TUCKER ESKEW; DEPARTMENT FOR PA A/S
BOUCHER FROM AMBASSADOR HULL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [IZ](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ON IRAQ: YEMENI IDEAS

1. (SBU) I spent two days this week in Aden publicizing U.S. development and security projects to remind the Yemeni government and public of their stake in our bilateral relationship as we move toward conflict in Iraq. One of my more interesting encounters was with the editors of Al Ayyam newspaper, an independent with the country's largest circulation.

2. (SBU) During my visit, Al Ayyam not only featured U.S. development and security projects, but also showcased an interview with me that allowed me to put US-Iraqi policy in the best possible light. I was surprised to find the newspaper's leadership strongly supportive of the US commitment to removing Saddam Hussein and allowing the Iraqi people to develop a democracy.

3. (SBU) As we discussed the probable conflict, Al Ayyam's editors had some pointed suggestions for cushioning the impact on Yemenis and other Arabs. They recalled photos of American Muslim GI's cleaning a mosque in Afghanistan and then praying in it. They also recalled a photo of American Muslim soldiers praying on an aircraft carrier. Both images, they said, sent strongly positive images to Muslims. They also welcome President Bush's continuing expressions of respect for Islam, e.g., visits to Islamic centers, meetings with American Muslims, messages on Islamic occasions. A third suggestion they made was to emphasize the positive effects of previous US military interventions in Kosovo and in Afghanistan on the daily lives of Muslims in those countries. Our message: in Iraq, as in Kosovo and Afghanistan, Muslims can look forward to better lives as a result of US intervention.

4. (SBU) I very much appreciated an opportunity to meet with you during the recent NEA Chief of Mission conference and hope the above thoughts are helpful to you as we explain our intervention in Iraq.
HULL